

South Dakota AFNR

Academic Integration Activities: Example #12

→ *Horticulture students use metaphors and similes to distinguish planting media.*

1. Ag Standard

HORT 4.2

Examine soils and planting media.

- > Distinguish soil mix materials and characteristics.

2. Academic Standard

11.R.3.1

Students can analyze and explain literary devices within text.

- > Recognize literary devices and communicate their effect within text:
 - Metaphor
 - Simile

3. Background Information

Metaphors and similes are both figures of speech used to draw comparison. They are typically used to add color and voice to text. Formal and technical writing typically avoids the use of either metaphors or similes.

Metaphor

A metaphor is an analogy between two objects or ideas. The analogy is conveyed by the use of a metaphorical word in place of some other word. Review these examples:

- > The bucking bull was a steamroller and sports car in one.
 - Creates the analogy that the bull was both strong and quick.
- > His question shown light on the issue that no one had been willing to address.
 - The question didn't actually create a light.
- > Jill's comment created a code red emergency among the 7th grade girls.
 - The comment didn't create an actual emergency – just the reaction as if it were one.

Simile

A simile is a figure of speech comparing two unlike things, often introduced with the words "like" and "as." Occasionally, a simile uses the word "than" to compare to unlike things. Review these examples:

- > She kicks as hard as a mule.
- > The bedroom closet was like the aftermath of a tornado.
- > I am happier than a puppy with two tails!

4. Example in Context

Plant growing media: Sand

Sand, a basic component of soil, ranges in particle size from 0.05mm to 2.0mm in diameter. Medium and coarse sand particles are those that provide optimum adjustments in media texture, resulting in increased drainage and aeration. Although sand is generally the least expensive of all inorganic amendments, it is also the heaviest.

Metaphor that highlights sand characteristics:

- > After adding sand to the media, water flow hit warp speed.
 - It didn't actually go that fast, but it did help speed water flow.

Simile that highlights sand characteristics:

- > Sand acts like tiny balloons in the soil media.
 - Two unlike things are compared.

5. Guided Practice Exercises

Plant growing media: Perlite

Perlite is a siliceous mineral of volcanic origin. The grades used in container media are first crushed and then heated until the vaporization of combined water expands it to a light, powdery substance. Lightness and uniformity make perlite very useful for increasing aeration and drainage. Perlite often floats during irrigation or plant watering.

Have the class work in small groups to create a metaphor and simile that highlight perlite characteristics. Here are some examples:

Metaphor that highlights perlite characteristics:

- > Adding perlite to the media created more elbow room for plant roots.
 - There are not actual elbows down there, but it does create more space for roots to grow.

Simile that highlights perlite characteristics:

- > Perlite is like thousands of fluffy snowballs.
 - Two unlike things are compared, using white and airy as the points of comparison.

6. Independent Practice Exercises

Plant growing media: Sphagnum moss

Sphagnum moss is the dehydrated remains of acid-bog plants from the genus Sphagnum (i.e., Spapillosum). It is light in weight and has the ability to absorb 10 to 20 times its weight in water. This is attributed to the large groups of water holding cells, which is characteristic of the genus. Sphagnum moss contains specific substances that help it inhibit damping-off of seedlings.

Assign individuals to create a metaphor and simile that highlight Sphagnum moss characteristics. Here are some examples:

Metaphor that highlights Sphagnum moss characteristics:

- > Sphagnum moss is the Under Armor® of plant media.
 - No workout clothes are in the plant pot, but both are light and moisture-absorbing.

Simile that highlights Sphagnum moss characteristics:

- > Sphagnum moss is as thirsty as a guy stranded in the desert for 10 days.
 - Two unlike things are compared, using extreme thirst as the point of comparison.

7. Notes

Assign metaphors and similes for each media you discuss and have students make flash cards with the media name on one side and the metaphor on the other side. Use them to help students remember media characteristics (and the difference between similes and metaphors).